

CLAIMS

1. A method of handling data from multiple data sources for a legal matter, comprising:
 - 5 selecting a plurality of key information prompts relating to and incorporating information identified in a preliminary review of critical data that is pertinent to a legal matter, wherein the key information prompts direct data entry agents to collect specific kinds of data that is pertinent to the legal matter;
 - entering data from data sources through the key information prompts;
 - 10 associating the data with the key information prompts;
 - storing the data in linkable, discrete packets;
 - storing such packets in data sets and data subsets; and
 - organizing the data sets and data subsets in a matter database.
- 15 2. A method of claim 1, further comprising presenting the data in a report.
3. A method of claim 2, wherein a viewer of the report may select the organization of the report by various parameters.
- 20 4. A method of claim 2, wherein a viewer of the report may view the report in real-time while entering data.
5. A method of claim 2, wherein a viewer of the report may cross-navigate between the report and corresponding data entry screens.
- 25 6. A method of claim 1, further comprising organizing matter databases to form case libraries where data from one matter database may be linkable or importable to data from another matter database.
- 30 7. A method of claim 1, wherein the key information prompts relate to at least one of case critical data, contact information, data relating to parties to the legal

matter, data relating to witnesses to legal matters, data relating to counsel for parties, data relating to a court, data relating to a judge, data relating to a date, data relating to a time, data relating to a sequence of events, data relating to a fact, data relating to a statement, data relating to an item of evidence, data relating to an entity, data relating to an institution, data relating to a legal issue, and data relating to a company.

8. A method of claim 1, further comprising enabling a user to analyze the data.

9. A method of claim 8, wherein permitting a user to analyze the data includes at least one of permitting linkage of data, term recognition of newly imported data, data queries, and data homogenization.

10. A method of claim 1, further comprising providing a data entry graphical user interface which includes specified key information prompts for specific kinds of data collection.

11. A method of claim 10, wherein the data entry graphical user interface includes a tiered data entry space.

12. A method of claim 11, wherein the tiered data entry space includes a first tier addressing critical details of the data source.

13. A method of claim 12, wherein the critical details are selected from the group consisting of a date, a document code, an evidence code, a source, a document type, an object type, a media type, an author, a contracting party, a narrator, an interviewer, a copied party, a receiving party, a sending party, an owner, a party mentioned, a location, and a dimension.

14. A method of claim 11, wherein the tiered data entry space includes a tier permitting detailed textual summary of the data source.

15. A method of claim 11, wherein the tiered data entry space includes a tier permitting analysis of legal issues.

16. A method of claim 11 wherein the tiered data entry space includes a tier for
5 commentary between data entry agents related to the data source and matter.

17. A method of claim 10, wherein the data entry graphical user interface fits in an active space that is viewed on the same screen as a real-time generation of the report.

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18. A method of claim 17, where such report contains cells or rows that are actively linked to specific records which appear in the data entry graphical user interface space.

15 19. A method of claim 10, wherein key information prompts of the graphical user interface address data captured from at least one of an interview, a deposition, a telephone call and a meeting.

20. A method of claim 10, where the data entry graphical user interface may be
20 adjusted through editing of certain key information prompts so that the data entry graphical user interface is thereby customized for collection of specific classes of data sources where such classes of data sources are selected from the group consisting of audio data sources, video or visual data sources, and data sources represented by tangible objects.

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21. A method of claim 10, further comprising a pop-up graphical user interface for data entry of people, organizations and other entities that appears at any instance where a data entry agent enters the name of at least one of a person, an organization, and an entity in the data entry graphical user interface and such name does not appear
30 in at least one of the matter database and corresponding scroll-down menus of the key information prompts residing in such data entry graphical user interface.

22. A method of claim 1, wherein the gathering of preliminary data includes a supervising data entry agent determining and assigning a finite number of legal issues for a particular matter to be analyzed for each data source by certain authorized data entry agents working on such matter.

23. A method of claim 22, wherein the supervising data entry agent can select issues from an issue database that resides in the system described by this invention.

24. A method of claim 22, wherein the data entry agents can suggest new issues.

25. A method of claim 24, wherein such issues are marked as pending.

26. A method of claim 24, wherein a supervisor can review such issues.

27. A method of claim 22, wherein the data entry agents can select new issues from the issue database.

28. A method of claim 27, wherein such issues are marked as pending.

29. A method of claim 28, wherein a supervisor can approve such issues.

30. A method of claim 10, wherein the data entry graphical user interface may be represented by other combinations of key information prompts which are embodied in pop-up graphical interfaces.

31. A method of claim 30, wherein the key information prompts are embodied in separate graphical user interfaces functioning independently of other graphical user interfaces.

32. A method of claim 1, where a pop-up graphical user interface appears during

entry of data to permit multiple entries of data linkable to the same data source and its corresponding data record within the matter database.

33. A method of claim 1, wherein the data sources are selected from the group
5 consisting of documents, word processing files, spreadsheets, presentations, email documents, instant messaging documents, ,audio media, tapes, CDs, MP3 files, .wav files, sound files, video media, VHS tapes, BETA tapes, DVDs, streaming video files, microfiche, microfilm, data storage facilities, relational databases, data repositories, data marts, object-oriented databases, disks, mass storage media, servers, jump drives,
10 flash memory, and memory sticks.

34. A method of claim 1, whereby authorized data entry agents are determined by the roles and privileges defined by supervising data entry agents(s).

15 35. A method of claim 1, wherein the data entry agent is selected from the group consisting of an attorney, an associate, a partner, an employee, a consultant, a student, an intern, a government official, a volunteer, an attendant, a team member, a system administrator, a contractor, a vendor, an accountant, an auditor, a private investigator, a principal, an administrator, a paralegal, a law enforcement official, a risk analyst, a
20 secretary, a document manager, litigation support staff personnel, an authorized user and a non-authorized user.

36. A method of claim 1, wherein the key information prompt is selected from a group consisting of object type, document type, media type, event, date, data source,
25 brief description, detailed description, evidence code, bates code, party's address, parties copied, recipient, sender, author, legal comments, issue analysis, a privileged notation, and a sensitive notation.

37. A method of claim 2, wherein the report may be viewed in real-time, while
30 data is entered, on the same screen as the key information prompts.

38. A method of claim 10, further comprising providing a report, wherein the report contains cells or links which correlate to key information data fields appearing on a corresponding graphical user interface where such user interface may be accessed and simultaneously viewed through clicking on a link.

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39. A method of claim 38, wherein the report consists of a four column chronogrid showing events/evidence, description of events/evidence, parties, and legal comments.

10 40. A method of claim 2, wherein the report relates to performance of data entry agents.

41. A method of claim 2, wherein the report relates to linkage of at least one of a key fact, an issue, an event, a date, a person, an organization, and a data source.

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42. A system of handling data from multiple data sources for a legal matter, comprising:

a data facility for selecting a plurality of key information prompts relating to and incorporating information identified in a preliminary review of critical data that is
20 pertinent to a legal matter, wherein the key information prompts direct data entry agents to collect specific kinds of data that is pertinent to the legal matter;

an extension of the data facility for entering data from data sources through the key information prompts;

25 an extension of the data facility for associating the data with the key information prompts;

an extension of the data facility for storing the data in linkable, discrete packets;

an extension of the data facility for storing such packets in data sets and data subsets; and

30 an extension of the data facility for organizing the data sets and data subsets in a matter database.

43. A system of claim 42, further comprising presenting the data in a report.
44. A system of claim 43, wherein a viewer of the report may select the
5 organization of the report by various parameters.
45. A system of claim 43, wherein a viewer of the report may view the report in
real-time while entering data.
- 10 46. A system of claim 43, wherein a viewer of the report may cross-navigate
between the report and corresponding data entry screens.
47. A system of claim 44, further comprising organizing matter databases to form
case libraries where data from one matter database may be linkable or importable to
15 data from another matter database.
48. A system of claim 42, wherein the key information prompts relate to at least
one of case critical data, contact information, data relating to parties to the legal
matter, data relating to witnesses to legal matters, data relating to counsel for parties,
20 data relating to a court, data relating to a judge, data relating to a date, data relating to
a time, data relating to a sequence of events, data relating to a fact, data relating to a
statement, data relating to an item of evidence, data relating to an entity, data relating
to an institution, data relating to a legal issue, and data relating to a company.
- 25 49. A system of claim 42, further comprising enabling a user to analyze the data.
50. A system of claim 49, wherein permitting a user to analyze the data includes
at least one of permitting linkage of data, term recognition of newly imported data,
data queries, and data homogenization.
- 30 51. A system of claim 42, further comprising providing a data entry graphical user

interface which includes specified key information prompts for specific kinds of data collection.

52. A system of claim 51, wherein the data entry graphical user interface includes
5 a tiered data entry space.

53. A system of claim 52, wherein the tiered data entry space includes a first tier addressing critical details of the data source.

10 54. A system of claim 53, wherein the critical details are selected from the group consisting of a date, a document code, an evidence code, a source, a document type, an object type, a media type, an author, a contracting party, a narrator, an interviewer, a copied party, a receiving party, a sending party, an owner, a party mentioned, a location, and a dimension.

15 55. A system of claim 52, wherein the tiered data entry space includes a tier permitting detailed textual summary of the data source.

20 56. A system of claim 52, wherein the tiered data entry space includes a tier permitting analysis of legal issues.

57. A system of claim 52 wherein the tiered data entry space includes a tier for commentary between data entry agents related to the data source and matter.

25 58. A system of claim 51, wherein the data entry graphical user interface fits in an active space that is viewed on the same screen as a real-time generation of the report.

30 59. A system of claim 58, where such report contains cells or rows that are actively linked to specific records which appear in the data entry graphical user interface space.

60. A system of claim 51, wherein key information prompts of the graphical user interface address data captured from at least one of an interview, a deposition, a telephone call and a meeting.

5 61. A system of claim 51, where the data entry graphical user interface may be adjusted through editing of certain key information prompts so that the data entry graphical user interface is thereby customized for collection of specific classes of data sources where such classes of data sources are selected from the group consisting of audio data sources, video or visual data sources, and data sources represented by
10 tangible objects.

62. A system of claim 51, further comprising a pop-up graphical user interface for data entry of people, organizations and other entities that appears at any instance where a data entry agent enters the name of at least one of a person, an organization,
15 and an entity in the data entry graphical user interface and such name does not appear in at least one of the matter database and corresponding scroll-down menus of the key information prompts residing in such data entry graphical user interface.

63. A system of claim 42, wherein the gathering of preliminary data includes a
20 supervising data entry agent determining and assigning a finite number of legal issues for a particular matter to be analyzed for each data source by certain authorized data entry agents working on such matter.

64. A system of claim 63, wherein the supervising data entry agent can select
25 issues from an issue database that resides in the system described by this invention.

65. A system of claim 63, wherein the data entry agents can suggest new issues.

66. A system of claim 65, wherein such issues are marked as pending.
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67. A system of claim 65, wherein a supervisor can review such issues.

68. A system of claim 63, wherein the data entry agents can select new issues from the issue database.

5 69. A system of claim 68, wherein such issues are marked as pending.

70. A system of claim 69, wherein a supervisor can approve such issues.

71. A system of claim 51, wherein the data entry graphical user interface may be
10 represented by other combinations of key information prompts which are embodied in pop-up graphical interfaces.

72. A system of claim 71, wherein the key information prompts are embodied in
15 separate graphical user interfaces functioning independently of other graphical user interfaces.

73. A system of claim 42, where a pop-up graphical user interface appears during entry of data to permit multiple entries of data linkable to the same data source and its corresponding data record within the matter database.

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74. A system of claim 42, wherein the data sources are selected from the group consisting of documents, word processing files, spreadsheets, presentations, email documents, instant messaging documents, ,audio media, tapes, CDs, MP3 files, .wav files, sound files, video media, VHS tapes, BETA tapes, DVDs, streaming video files,
25 microfiche, microfilm, data storage facilities, relational databases, data repositories, data marts, object-oriented databases, disks, mass storage media, servers, jump drives, flash memory, and memory sticks.

75. A system of claim 42, whereby authorized data entry agents are determined by
30 the roles and privileges defined by supervising data entry agents(s).

76. A system of claim 42, wherein the data entry agent is selected from the group consisting of an attorney, an associate, a partner, an employee, a consultant, a student, an intern, a government official, a volunteer, an attendant, a team member, a system administrator, a contractor, a vendor, an accountant, an auditor, a private investigator, a principal, an administrator, a paralegal, a law enforcement official, a risk analyst, a secretary, a document manager, litigation support staff personnel, an authorized user and a non-authorized user.

77. A system of claim 42, wherein the key information prompt is selected from a group consisting of object type, document type, media type, event, date, data source, brief description, detailed description, evidence code, bates code, party's address, parties copied, recipient, sender, author, legal comments, issue analysis, a privileged notation, and a sensitive notation.

78. A system of claim 43, wherein the report may be viewed in real-time, while data is entered, on the same screen as the key information prompts.

79. A system of claim 51, further comprising providing a report, wherein the report contains cells or links which correlate to key information data prompts appearing on the corresponding graphical user interface where such user interface may be accessed and simultaneously viewed through clicking on a link.

80. A system of claim 79 wherein the report consists of a four column chronogrid showing events/evidence, description of events/evidence, parties, and legal comments.

81. A system of claim 43, wherein the report relates to performance of data entry agents.

82. A system of claim 43, wherein the report relates to linkage of at least one of a key fact, an issue, an event, a date, a person, an organization, and a data source.